

ESPON project 2.3.1

Application and effects of the ESDP in the Member States

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CASE STUDY:
FRANCE
"SCHÉMAS RÉGIONAUX D'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE"
("SRADT")

INTRODUCTION

1 – Reasons for choosing this case study

The "Schémas régionaux d'aménagement du territoire" ("SRADTs") are prospective documents realised in each French regions (regional elected institutions) for a period of time of approximately 15 to 20 years. Given their prospective nature and their vision of a desirable future, they have been considered as good counterparts of the ESDP at an infra-national level.

The aim of the case study is then to evaluate to which extent these documents are taking into account the orientations of the ESDP.

It is important to consider that the "SRADTs" should influence the elaboration of more operational documents: the "Contrat de Plan État-Région" (CPER), contract signed between the regions in the central State in order to implement regional spatial policies.

2 – General context (for more details on the general context, see national report)

The "SRADTs" are mentioned in the 1995 law on spatial planning ("Loi d'orientation pour l'aménagement et le développement du territoire").

Regions should elaborate such a prospective document in order to plan future programmes in the framework of the “Contrat de Plan État-Région” (see National Reports for details). Nevertheless, it has to be noticed that the document considered as “SRADTs” at regional level are of a different quality from one region to another. For instance, the region Alsace has decided to realise a lighter document, which only give a future perspective to policies, which are already put into practice by the regional authority.

Even if they are of a different kind, we have decided to take into account all the regional documents of a prospective type delivered between 1999 and 2003 (last one to be validated), that is to say twelve documents that have been reviewed. Five “SRADTs” have been elaborated before the ESDP, six are still to be elaborated (or in a process of being renewed). One region does not realise any kind of prospective document of this type¹.

3. Levels

Levels	Directly or Indirectly
Transnational	I
National	I
Sub-national	D

The main level that is addressed is the regional one (Sub-national) as far as the “SRADTs” are drawn up by the regional authorities.

Naturally, as far as “SRADTs” are linked to a legal national framework and because they are supposed to be the basis for the elaboration of the operational “Contrats de Plan État-Région” they are also of a national indirect interest.

¹ We did not obtain the document for two regions. They are 26 regions, 22 in France and 4 overseas.

Finally, some regions quoted in their "SRADTs" their involvement in trans-national cooperation (example: Atlantic Arc).

4. Aspects addressed

Aspects addressed	Directly or Indirectly
Territorial	D
Instrumental	D
Procedural	D

The "SRADT" is a document with spatial ambition ("aménagement du territoire" and regional development), which can be considered as an instrument to plan future policies at regional level thanks to the 7 years CPER. It can also refer to ways to achieve regional goals. From that point of view, it can be said, as a starting point, that the three aspects are addressed in this case study.

Key points:

- Reasons for choosing the "SRADTs" and main level concern: comparable type of prospective document as the ESDP at sub-national level;
- Aspects addressed: *a priori* all the aspects.

5. Effects/ impacts

Effects/impacts	Rank time (see explanation for no answer below)	Rank importance
Institutional changes	--	1
Changes in planning policies	--	4
Changes in planning practices	--	3
Changes in planning discourses	--	7
Changes in spatial representation (images)	--	6
Spatial development	--	2
No change	--	5

It is very difficult to assess the precise chronology of effects/impacts. Nevertheless, what seems to be clear is that the "SRADTs" that have been elaborated at the time of validation of the ESDP generally contain reference to it. The draft for future "SRADTs" (not taken into account in the case study but reviewed for information) which are drawn nowadays (as for instance the one of Nord-Pas-de-Calais and Rhône-Alpes regions) do not mention the ESDP at all even if their orientations can be linked, at least partly, to the ESDP policy aims and options.

Dealing with Rank importance², the clearest effect is the incorporation of references to the ESDP in a majority of cases as a general way to take into account European dimension in spatial planning field (Centre region). Sometimes, the ESDP is considered as the symbol of

the need for cooperation in European in spatial planning field (Champagne-Ardenne, Basse-Normandie regions). In a more ambitious perspective, the Picardie region call for a renewal of spatial planning policies thanks to the ESDP. The SRADT of Burgundy evokes the need to coordinate the different spatial policy (between institutions at different level, between sectoral and territorial policies).

Some region considered as an important issue to replace their territory in an European geographical context (Centre, Champagne-Ardenne) as far as the regional public opinion is not sufficiently aware of this dimension (Poitou-Charente) or because of the lack of visibility of the region at an European scale (Auvergne). Some regions considered that they are part of sub-European region as the North-West for the Picardie region, the Atlantic Arc for Pays de la Loire and Poitou-Charente or the mediterranean area for Languedoc-Rousillon. From that point of view, even if the intentions are very general, it can be considered as a way to foster new spatial representations.

The evocation of changes in planning policies is rather general. The type of documents do not allow to evaluate clearly the real changes that have occurred. Nevertheless, it can be said that the explicit general reference to the ESDP and to the need to take into account its orientations – even if they are not clearly identified as policy aims and options of the ESDP as we will see later -, show at least, as a general intention, a will to incorporate this dimension in spatial planning policy at regional level. Even if few regions are concerned, we can identify two types of effects of an apparent different impact:

- the renewal of the spatial planning policy according to the ESDP orientations for the Picardie region;
- the need to shape a regional policy in line with the orientations of the ESDP for the Alsace, Centre, Champagne-Ardenne and Burgundy regions; this option not being exclusive of references to other policy aims of a general type (references to national policy, for instance).

Dealing now with planning practices, the impacts/effects can be considered as consequences of some kind of general changes in policies (Picardie, Centre) or more focus in one aspect of the ESDP.

For instance, in the case of Champagne-Ardenne and Basse-Normandie what is underlined is the need to develop cooperation. In Burgundy, the need to coordinate policies between institutions and between sectors.

Spatial development is taken into account by fewer SRADTs. The SRADT of Picardie directly refers to the ESDP opting for a polycentric development where the region would take advantage of its position to promote its development. The condition it is a good and balanced organisation of the region in terms of equipments and services. The region Burgundy also refers to its position (in between Île-de-France and Rhone-Alpes) in a European context. The final aim would be to organise the region properly to benefit from these regional influences. Nevertheless, even if the European context is taken into account there is no explicit reference to the ESDP on that field. The SRADT of the Auvergne region deals with the need to constitute a real regional metropolis in order to play a role at the European level but it is not explicitly link to the ESDP options and aims on cities and urban regions.

Finally, no regions have known institutional changes linked to the implementation of the ESDP.

6. The causality and the ESDP application process

The SRADTs study shows that the application has to be considered, in most of the cases, as an implicit one. Indeed, dealing with the specific content of the documents, only indirect relations can be done between the ESDP policy aims and options and the "SRADTs" with some little exceptions.

When the documents are dealing explicitly with the ESDP, it is in some specific aspects of the ESDP. For instance, the "SRADT" of Basse-Normandie, explicitly refers to the ESDP when dealing with European corridors and intermodal transports. This "SRADT" and the ones of Champagne-Ardenne and Auvergne refer to the ESDP as far as the European cooperation is concerned. The one of Burgundy refers to Transport European Networks. From that point of view, it

seems that the more explicit and concrete reference to the ESDP are in the fields of cooperation (which is somehow a transversal theme of the ESDP) and transports (3.3.1; 3.3.2; 3.3.3 policy aims).

Only one example can be given of a will of an explicit application of the ESDP thanks to the example of Picardie region. In this "SRADT" broader and explicit references are made of the ESDP and to its 3 main orientations. The SRADT consider that the ESDP fits perfectly with the strategic orientations of the region.

Consequently, in the case of "SRADTs", the French situation can be summarized in two different types according to the regions, the case of Picardie region appearing as an exception:

- an implicit application with some hints of explicit application in some specific fields;
- an implicit application.

Dealing now with a causal link it is much more difficult. In the case of explicit references, it can be considered, in the framework of such prospective documents, that a causal link can be established. But, implicit application is much more difficult to consider. It is obvious, given at least the rhetorical references to the ESDP, that a kind of "atmosphere" has influenced regional authority when writing these prospective documents. That is particularly clear for the documents realised in parallel or no longer after the adoption of the ESDP.

The situation is different for the more precise ESDP policy aims. Indeed, if the following aims appear implicitly to be in a good position in the "SDRATs" documents:

- Preservation and development of the Natural Heritage;
- Polycentric and Balanced Spatial Development in the UE;
- Polycentric Development Model: A Basis for Better Accessibility;
- Diffusion of Innovation and Knowledge.

Some policy aims are less taken into account even if they appear in a rather good or average position:

- Indigenous development, Diverse and productive Rural Areas
- Creative Management of Cultural Landscapes
- Urban-rural partnership
- Creative management and Cultural Heritage

The 3.2.2, 3.3.3, 3.4.3 policy aims are even less implicitly taken into account³.

To conclude, the “SRADTs” do not show an explicit application of the ESDP as a whole.

7. Effects of initiatives/programmes

Initiatives/programmes	Effects
Tampere Action Programme (various actions)	
Cross-border co-operation arrangements (e.g. Interreg IIIA)	X
Transnational co-operation arrangements (e.g. Interreg IIIB)	X
Structural Funds	X
Urban exchange initiative	
Other, please, specify	Transport European Networks (see explanation below)

³ 3.3.1 and 3.4.1 are considered here as a general headings for the 3.3.2 and 3.3.3 policy aims and 3.4.2, 3.4.3 respectively.

As a general overview, the reference to initiatives and programmes are not very numerous and not very precise. The references are often very general without any precise view on the actions, which are developed. That is why we can only identify here some examples, listed below:

- Cross-border co-operation arrangements (example: Champagne-Ardenne)
- Trans-national co-operation arrangements: in reference to the ESDP, few "SRADTs" are dealing with European cooperation as for instance:
 - the Atlantic Arc (Poitou-Charente, Pays-de-la-Loire regions);
 - The North-West Europe (Picardie);
 - The mediterranean regions (Languedoc-Roussillon).
- Structural Funds: in the cases of Basse-Normandie and Picardie the Structural Funds are taken into account when dealing with theirs reform and thinking about a way to adapt the regional policies to the future changes. From that point of view, the ESDP is seen as a first step for the future agreement to be reached by 2006.
- Transport European Networks: as already points it out, the general theme of European transports is generally considered as an important issue in the "SRADTs" studied. Nevertheless, we only notice one explicit reference to TEN in the SRADT of Burgundy region.

8. Concepts applied

- The General ESDP spatial planning approach (philosophy).

The ESDP is rather considered as a general starting point, viewed as a framework to take into account among others. That is the case in most of the documents reviewed. It is much more difficult to identify a direct relation between the concepts of the ESDP and precise elements of the "SRADTs".

- Spatial impacts where the application of the ESDP has been most important.

	Rank
Vertical integration	(see explanation below)
Horizontal integration	(see explanation below)
Spatial integration	(see explanation below)

Very few and unclear references are made in the "SRADTs" on the following aspects. The more obvious reference is the one to vertical integration between different policy levels. Reference to horizontal and spatial integration can be deducted but still unclear. Anyway, they are linked to the ESDP but considered as a need to take into account different levels of planning from the European scale to the local one.

- vertical integration / cooperation: vertical integration (see here as the relations between Europe, the central State, the Region and local authorities) is considered as a way to take part to the institutional elaboration of the European Union policy for the region Basse-Normandie and Picardie or a way to coordinate policy in the case of the Champagne-Ardenne and Burgundy regions.
- Horizontal integration / cooperation: The only and clear example to a reference to horizontal integration / cooperation can be noticed in the SRADT of Basse-Normandie refers to the need of coordination of policies between European regions.
- Spatial integration: only one example can be given in that respect, the one of Champagne-Ardenne where the need to tune local development policies with European policies is considered.

- Policy guidelines, policy aims, policy options

		APPLICATION				NON APPLICATION		
		←-----→						
		Explicit			Implicit			
	ESDP sub-headings/ policy aims	Change or conformance mainly due to the application of the ESDP	Change or conformance due to ESDP and other factors	Change or conformance due to other factors	No change as policy was already in conformity with ESDP	No change and/or conformance as issue/policy still under discussion	No change and/or conformance as the issue/policy is not considered appropriate	No change and/or conformance due to a lack of awareness of the ESDP
3.2 Policentric Spatial Development and a New Urban-Rural relationship	Polycentric & Balanced Spatial Development in the UE (3.2.1)		X					
	Dynamic, Attractive & Competitive Cities & Urbanised Regions (3.2.2)							X
	Indigenous Development, Diverse and productive Rural Areas (3.2.3)			X				
	Urban-Rural Partnership (3.2.4)			X				

3.3 Parity of Access to Infrastructure and Knowledge	An Integrated Approach to Infrastructure and Knowledge (3.3.1)			X				
	Polycentric Development Model: A Basis for Better Accessibility (3.3.2)		X					
	Efficient and Sustainable Use of the Infrastructure (3.3.3)							X
	Diffusion of Innovation and Knowledge (3.3.4)				X			
3.4 Wise management of the Natural and Cultural Heritage	Natural and Cultural Heritage as a Development asset (3.4.1)			X				
	Preservation & Development of the Natural Heritage (3.4.2)			X				
	Water Resource Management - a Special Challenge for Spatial Development (3.4.3)							X
	Creative Management of Cultural Landscapes (3.4.4)			X				
	Creative management and Cultural Heritage (3.4.5)			X				

The table has been cut off of the explicit references to policy options as far as they are too punctual (European corridors, intermodal

transports, Transport European Networks, that is to say policy options 24 and 33 - cf. Point 6 -).

The other explicit references (cf. Point 6) are dealing with a more transversal issue, European cooperation, which cannot be linked to one single policy option.

To summarise the choice done in the table above for:

- Polycentric spatial development (polycentricity) and new urban-rural relationship:
 - Polycentric and Balanced Spatial Development in the UE: we have considered here that the reference to European polycentricity has clearly influenced the regional authorities when writing the "SRADTs". Nevertheless, debate on polycentricity is a long-standing one in France due to the weight of middle-size cities and regional metropolis in the French urban network.
 - Dynamic Attractive and Competitive Cities and Urbanised Regions: no relations (even implicit ones) have been noticed between the content of the "SRADTs" and the policy options contains in this sub-heading.
 - Indigenous Development, Diverse and productive Rural Areas: The other factors taken into account to make our choice are the ones link to the CAP reforms.
 - Urban-Rural partnership: The other factor considered here is mainly the French "Pays" policy, which consists in fostering urban-rural relations.
- Parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge:
 - An integrated Approach to Infrastructure and Knowledge: as far as this policy aim is a kind of synthesis of the following aims under this axis, the choice is also supposed to be a synthesis of the other answers given below.

- Polycentric Development Model: A Basis for Better Accessibility: the implicit reference to options 24, 27 and to a certain extent to option 28 but also considering the few explicit references (see above for explanation) to TEN, make us consider that the "SRADTs" take the policy aim implicitly into account. That can be explained by the competence of regional authority transport matters in France but also because of the awareness of the European dimension of transport deriving from the ESDP.
- Efficient and Sustainable Use of the Infrastructure: this policy aim (defines thanks to the policy options listed) never really appears in the "SRADTs" studied. That is why, it can be considered as a lack of awareness of the ESDP, but even can be considered as a lack of general awareness of this issue.
- Diffusion of Innovation and Knowledge: the choice can be explained by the long-standing involvement of regional authorities in that field. Indeed a lot of regional initiatives have been taken since the 80's, which matched quite well with the policy options of this sub-heading. Consequently, it is not possible to say that the ESDP has had any impact, even implicitly, in the choices of the regions in that field.
- Wise management of the natural and cultural heritage:
 - Natural and Cultural Heritage as a Development Asset: as far as this policy aim is a kind of synthesis, the choice is also supposed to be a synthesis of the other answers given below.
 - Preservation and Development of the Natural Heritage: many references to environmental issues can be quoted in the "SRADTs" studied but without any references to the ESDP. That can be explained both by the competences of the regions in that field and by the increasing concern on this issue.
 - Water Resource Management – a Special Challenge for Spatial Development: this policy aim is

apparently of a very little concern for the regions as far as the "SRADTs" are concerned. The "SRADTs" which are implicitly dealing with it, do not refer to any kind of European orientations in that field. It can be considered that the detailed policy options of the ESDP are generally neither explicitly nor implicitly taken into account. This can be surprising as far as the regions have specific competences on management of water pollution.

- Creative Management of Cultural Landscape: the implicit reference to the policy options under this subheadings are sufficient to consider that there is, in some regions, conformance even if no link can be made with the ESDP. It has to rely on other factors as the action of the regions in field as culture and tourism and on the increasing interest for that issue.
- Creative management and Cultural Heritage (same comment as above).

- "Spatial positioning":

The relations of the regions towards Europe can be of two types according to the "SRADTs" studied:

- Institutional without reference to a precise territorial dimension: what it is addressed here is the need to think spatial planning in relation with the central State and the European Union.
- Spatial dimension: some regions tend to consider their position in Europe taking into account their insertion in a sub-regional European area (Languedoc-Rousillon in the mediterranean area, Picardie in North-West Europe, Poitou-Charente and Pays-de-La-Loire in the Atlantic Arc); or more generally thinking about their situation in Europe in terms of strategic positioning (the geographical situation of the region: advantages and disadvantages, issues, potentials) as for example the Centre or Champagne-Ardenne regions; or even questioning its place in Europe (What legibility?) as the Auvergne region.

III CONCLUSIONS

9. General observations

As a starting hypothesis, we thought that the "SRADTs" were interesting to study in the perspective of the application of the ESDP for different reasons:

- The "SRADTs" can be considered as a kind of regional counterparts to the ESDP because of their prospective nature;
- The Regional authorities ("Conseils régionaux") in charge of drawing up the "SRADTs" have a specific competence in terms of "Aménagement du territoire" at a regional level.
- The Regions have relations to the European institutions, notably when dealing with the objectives 1 and 2 and with the *Interreg* programme. From that point of view, they should be in the first line when considering orientations of the European Union.
- Dealing directly with the application of the ESDP, the interesting point in studying the "SRADTs" rely on the fact that they are considered as the basis for more operational documents, the "Contrat de Plan État-Région".
- Finally, the "SRADTs" are either of a territorial, institutional and procedural nature.

At this final stage, it can be said that the ESDP is taken into account in the "SRADTs" but as a general reference among others. From that point of view, as far as the application has been judged as an implicit one, the influence of the ESDP can be compared as a kind of general "atmosphere" that lead the regions to take into account issues considered both at the European and regional levels (polycentrism). The reference to the ESDP, very obvious in the "SRADTs" realised at the time or just after the validation of the ESDP can be explained by the role of France in the ESDP process. Nevertheless, it can be surprising to notice that the references to application are not explicit ones and still, in general, very imprecise, that is to say, without any clear

references to policy aims and options. Would it be that no concrete appropriation has been done by the regional level in France of what can be considered as a State level business (i.e. the negotiation of the ESDP)? This explanation seems to be consistent with the lack of references to the ESDP in the more recent drafts for drawing up future "SDRATs", as far as the ESDP is not as much as in the agenda than it was before.

Anyway, for some regions, the ESDP can be considered as a symbolic document of the need of cooperation in Europe and of their insertion in a broader perspective than the national one ("spatial positioning").

Implicit application implies not direct link to the ESDP policy aims and options except some very view exceptions dealing with transports (European corridors, Intermodal transports, TEN) and European cooperation. The first one, in direct relation with policy aims and options of the ESDP, can be linked to the important role in transport issues of the Regions. The second one is more transversal and difficult to refer to one single policy aims and/or options.

The influence of the ESDP considered as implicitly applied can vary from one policy aim to another. Dealing with polycentrism (3.2.1 and 3.3.2), it is clear that even if the ESDP is not quoted by itself, its role has had an impact on the way French regions see their place and role in Europe. Nevertheless, the regional conception is focused on the urban network and not on the cities by themselves (3.2.2), which allows to ask the question of the nature of the relations between Regions and cities in France, particularly regional metropolis. The implicit application of other policy aims is more surely due to long-standing national, regional and local policies to promote local development, urban-rural partnership, and diffusion of innovation and knowledge (3.2.3, 3.2.4, 3.3.4). Environmental issues considered broadly are in an very contrasted position: nearly nothing it is said on the "Sustainable Use of Infrastructures" (3.3.3) and on "Water Resource Management" (3.4.3) – which is rather surprising given the role of region in water pollution matters -; meanwhile the stress is put on natural heritage and cultural landscapes fields in which regions have specific competences.

10. Recommendations

Considering the "SRADTs", we have assisted since 1999 to the diminishing influence of the ESDP policy aims and options. If the ESDP has been at least taken into account in a formal way notably in the "SRADTs" realise at the time of the ESDP delivery, it seems that its influence is getting down. Maybe it is due to the weak involvement of the regions in the process of elaboration of such general document conceive in between the national States and the European Union. A stronger involvement of the regions at the stage of negotiating the terms of an agreement on spatial planning at a European scale should be a way to better involve the regions in an ESDP-type process. What is more, it would be a way to take into account what has already been done in the regions and to identify what could be done in the future differentiating types of European regions according to general objectives.

The urban dimension (inner cities) is neglected in the "SRADTs". Naturally, that can be explained in the French case by institutional reasons linked to the respective competences of the regions and the cities. But, to counterbalance that kind of situation, it seems that the 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 aims should be though as the same issue in order not to distinguish the regional issues from the urban (inner-cities) issues. The capacity of cities to organize theirs regions in a general process of "metropolization", as a way to share benefit of this process with other parts of the regional territory (including medium-sized and even small cities and towns). The question is to think about a way (at European, national or regional levels) to have an overview of their relations and of the way they can act together to promote at regional level a better balanced and developed territory, which is also a condition of a good integration in a global economy.

Finally, we have noticed that only vertical relations are seriously taken into account when dealing with European spatial planning from a French regional point of view (at least when dealing with "SRADTs"). This is hardly surprising as far as the Structural Funds are still managed in a rather vertical perspective in France (in spite of some recent reforms that have reinforce the role of the regions in that field). The horizontal and territorial dimensions are not taken here into account. The planned reform of the Structural Funds for the period 2006-2013 seems to give a more important

role to national State in the implementation of the funds. Then, what about the relations of the European Union to regional and local territories? May be a way would be found, in which the European funds will help more territorially based initiatives (i.e. *Leader* programme) as the "Pays" policy in France.

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